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DIGEST OF WATER POLLUTION CONTROL LEGISLATION ... DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Public Health Service
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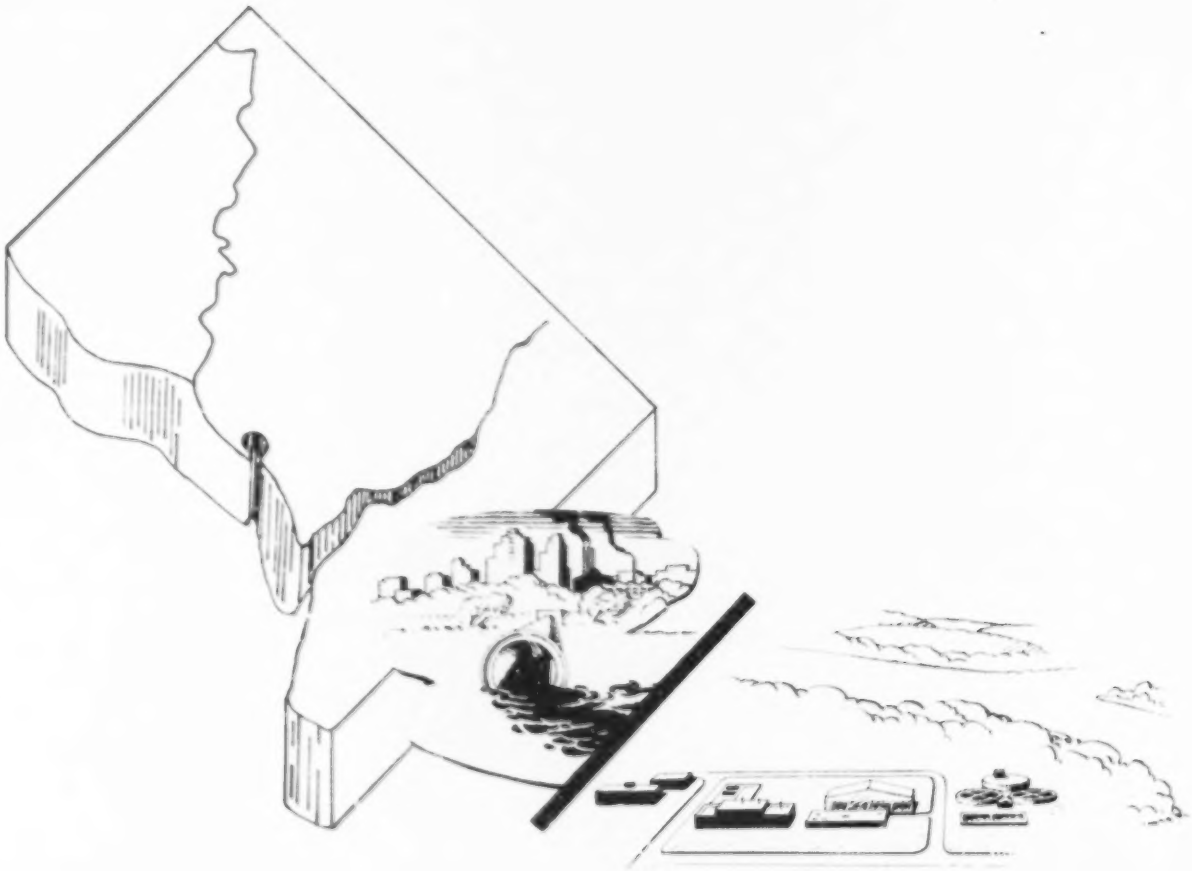

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Public Health Service

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Section 3 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 466b) directs the Public Health Service to "encourage the enactment of improved and, so far as practicable, uniform State laws relating to the prevention and control of water pollution."

This Digest is one of a series prepared by the Public Health Service as a service to the States and others interested in these objectives. Cooperation of State officials in the preparation of these digests is gratefully acknowledged.

September 1958

DIGEST OF DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA WATER POLLUTION CONTROL LEGISLATION

I. GENERAL STATEMENT

In the District of Columbia the Board of Commissioners is authorized to make and enforce all reasonable and usual police regulations deemed necessary for the protection of the lives, health and comfort of the persons within the District (Title 1, sec. 226)1/.

The Commissioners appoint a Director of Public Health, who must be a physician. He is charged with the duty of enforcing and executing all laws and regulations relating to the public health (Title 6, sec. 101).

The Director of the Department of Sanitary Engineering is charged with the duty of performing sanitary engineering services and operations for the District, including water distribution, sanitary, storm, and combined sewer systems, sewage treatment, and collection and disposal of waste material (Supp. V, Title 6, sec. 401, Reorg. Ord. No. 28, 4-3-53).

II. MISCELLANEOUS STATUTORY PROVISIONS RELATING TO WATER POLLUTION

Each lot situated on any street in the District where there is a public sewer must be connected thereto in such a manner that all drainage from such lot drains into the sewer, if there are buildings on such lot, or if there are no buildings, then when certified by the Health Officer that such connection is necessary to the public health (Title 6, sec. 401). Failure to make such connection within 30 days after notice is a misdemeanor (Title 6, sec. 403).

It is unlawful to maintain any system of disposal of human excreta except by means of water-closets connected with sewer mains where there is a

1/ Citations in this digest refer to the District of Columbia Code (1951 ed.) and Supplement V thereto, unless otherwise noted.

public sewer available. Violation is punishable by a fine of not more than $50 or by imprisonment for not exceeding 15 days (Title 6, secs. 701, 704).

Every person who maliciously commits any act by reason of which the supply of water to the City of Washington becomes impure, filthy or unfit for use is subject to a fine of not less than $500 nor more than $1,000, or imprisonment for not more than three years nor less than one year (Title 22, sec. 3118).

It is unlawful to cast, throw or deposit any stone, gravel, ballast, dirt, sand, oyster shells, or ashes in the water in any part of the Potomac River or its tributaries in the District of Columbia, or on the shores of such river below highwater mark, unless for the purpose of making a wharf, after permission has been obtained from the Commissioners of the District of Columbia for that purpose. It is further made unlawful to cast or throw into such waters any dead fish, offal or filth of any kind whatever. These prohibitions do not prevent work of improvement in or along the said river and harbor under the supervision of the United States Government. Violation is a misdemeanor, punishable by a fine of not exceeding $100, or by imprisonment not exceeding 6 months, or both (Title 22, sec. 1702).

It is unlawful to allow any tar, oil, ammoniacal liquor, or other waste products of any gas works or works engaged in using such products, or any waste product whatever of any mechanical, chemical, manufacturing, or refining establishment to flow into or be deposited in Rock Creek or the Potomac River or any of its tributaries within the District of Columbia or into any pipe or conduit leading to the same. Violation carries a fine of not less than $10 nor more than $100 (Title 22, sec. 1703).

III. INTERSTATE COMPACTS

The District of Columbia is a party to a compact between the States of Maryland and West Virginia and the Commonwealths of Virginia and Pennsylvania and the District of Columbia, creating the Potomac Valley Conservancy District and establishing an Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin, relating to the control of future pollution and the abatement of existing pollution of the Potomac River Basin (Bd. of Comm. Res. adopted 4-16-40, pursuant to Pub. Res. No. 74, 75th Cong., 1st Sess., Ch. 891, 8-31-37, 50 Stat. 884; Pub. Res. No. 93, 76th Cong., 2d & 3d Sess., Ch. 579, 7-11-40, 54 Stat. 748).